

**Montana  
State Action for Education Leadership Project II**

**Proposal  
For  
SAELP II**

**Submitted to the Wallace Foundation**

**by the  
Montana SAELP State Consortium**

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**And**

**Montana Professional Associations**

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Montana Rural Education Association*

*Montana Education Association-Montana Federation of Teachers*

**Montana Universities with Educational Leadership Preparation Programs**

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## **Section I: Executive Summary**

Montana's SAELP II proposal pairs high performing demonstration districts with underperforming districts in a "paired schools" model to provide assistance and expertise to improve student performance. This design is the key strategy that will be used to assist those schools identified by No Child Left Behind as schools in need of improvement.

Because our state is so large geographically, we intend to divide the state into five regions and create regional networks. We will select one high performing demonstration district in each region who will assist four of the lowest performing schools in that region. Thus, the grant will support a statewide network of 25 schools and districts. Subcontracts will be awarded to the high performing demonstration districts to support intervisitations for training, modeling, coaching, mentoring and for networking within their region.

As a result of our SAELP I efforts, Montana revised administrative preparation programs and administrative certification to align with ISLLC standards. Additionally, the State Board adopted rule that requires all districts create and implement school and district improvement plans. Building on that work, our Breakthrough Idea #1 calls for a paired-school leadership development plan that will strengthen the skills and knowledge of superintendents and principals in 'leading for results' in student achievement. Through the expertise and assistance of high performing principals and superintendents, those who are less skilled and experienced will have models, coaches, and mentors to redefine their roles, responsibilities and authority. A new evaluation of superintendents and principals that is linked to standards and student achievement will provide the accountability needed to ensure practice does indeed change.

Our Breakthrough Idea #2 uses the same paired-school model to create leadership teams that include teacher leaders in a distributive leadership model. The Board rule requiring school and district improvement plans also requires the involvement of teachers in the planning and implementation of school improvement strategies. However, teachers in underperforming schools may not have the models, skills, and authority to assume leadership roles. To provide accountability to change, teacher unions would need to accept differentiated roles and compensation for teachers and teacher evaluation would need to be linked to student achievement.

The expected result from our SAELP II proposal and work is measurable improvements in student achievement in our lowest performing schools. These schools serve our most at risk population of high poverty Native American children living on reservations. We expect to see the gap of achievement narrowed between these students and the larger population through the implementation of these two Breakthrough Ideas.

## Section II: Proposal Narrative

### 1. State Context and Needs

The major strength of Montana SAELP Consortium is our strong consortium that has demonstrated a commitment to working together to improve leadership in Montana schools with the ultimate outcome of improved student achievement. Utilizing SAELP I support, the Montana Consortium developed seven strong initiatives and made substantial progress on, or fully implemented, all seven initiatives. Subsequently, policies changed, practices were altered, collaborations were established; and, perhaps most importantly, values and beliefs have shifted to include an awareness of the critical component of leadership in improving student achievement. Policymakers and key stakeholders in Montana agree that SAELP I made a positive and sustaining impact on the conditions of practice and policies that effect school leaders. New leaders will be better prepared. Despite notable SAELP I accomplishments, we recognize, however, that efforts to date have not made the kind of sustainable changes in day-to-day practice that result in improved student learning. Thus, our SAELP II goal is to connect our

***Despite notable SAELP I accomplishments, we recognize, however, that efforts to date have not made the kind of broad, sustained impact on student achievement that is needed.***

SAELP I work of improving policies and conditions for school leaders to improved student learning by helping school leaders acquire necessary skills and knowledge to improve student learning. Among the challenges are:

- Rurally isolated underachieving schools located on or near Indian reservations with high percentages of minority and poverty students.
- Many underachieving schools have the financial resources (through Impact Aid) but not the skill and knowledge to improve their schools.
- Rurally isolated underachieving schools cannot attract and retain skillful leaders and teachers. They tend to have the most inexperienced staff.
- Community social problems are excuses for low performance. Many leaders and teachers don't believe that they can reverse historical traditions of low performance.
- Existing state strategies for improvement focus on programs, not systemic reform. The state lacks a strong assistance model. Most efforts have been unsuccessful quick fix strategies.
- Indian reservations are historically suspicious of outside experts who want to "fix" them.
- Underachieving schools don't have a structure that supports teaching and learning.

Our SAELP II proposal is to create a "paired school" network across five regions in Montana which will pair high performing schools with low performing schools to measurably improve leadership and subsequently student achievement in these and, ultimately all, Montana schools.

Four important and unique conditions drive this ambitious goal. First is the vastness of Montana. To have statewide impact, we will divide the state into regions and implement a paired school model of high and low achieving schools with similar demographics in each regions. Each region roughly equals the geographic area of most eastern states. Second, Montana lacks a LEAD district to provide a single model site. To make the broadest impact, we must distribute improvement strategies across our large state. Third, Montana has 435 school districts,

complicating reform and improvement efforts. Finally, school districts with high concentrations of Native American children and the related issues of reservation poverty and difficult social conditions are among the lowest achieving schools. All but three schools identified in our state as ‘Schools in Need of Improvement’ under No Child Left Behind are on or near Indian Reservations. In order for these schools to experience high achievement and for Montana to narrow the achievement gap, they desperately need models and assistance if all of Montana’s children are to succeed.

## 2. Montana’s Breakthrough Ideas that will Address the Goal of SAELP II

**SAELP Breakthrough**  
**Idea #1: Build**  
**leadership capacity by**  
**pairing**  
**underperforming**  
**schools with high**  
**performing**  
**demonstration schools to**  
**meet targeted student**  
**achievement goals.**

### A. Identify Breakthrough Ideas

#### Key Condition Change

Montana SAELP I was successful in aligning standards for State accreditation of administrative preparation programs with ISLLC standards and revising State certification of school administrators with ISLLC standards. These two critical policy changes will insure that administrators entering practice now and in the future will be instructional leaders prepared to focus on improved student achievement. However, these policy changes do little to change practices of current school administrators trained in traditional preparation programs focusing on management. Many practicing leaders view their central task as “damping down conflict” or general management and leave matters of instruction to teachers. They often lack the skill and knowledge to create and sustain change that results in improved student learning. Perhaps even more important, they lack high expectations for every child and often settle for poor performance from significant student populations—particularly ethnic minorities and poor students who are Montana’s children with the greatest need. Subsequently, Montana, like other states, has schools and districts with long histories of underperformance. High performing demonstration schools can assist underperforming schools by supporting them with standards and research based quality professional development, modeling and mentoring and the expertise to enable leaders to better address underperforming students.

At the state level, a key condition to support change was implemented when the Montana Board of Public Education adopted a rule requiring all schools to develop and implement a district and school improvement plan that is data informed and aligned to targeted student improvement goals. However, underperforming schools lack the knowledge and skill to create and implement such a plan. Conditions need to change if the goal is to actually improve student achievement. Superintendents and principal evaluation needs to be aligned with student achievement. Districts need to be evaluated using multiple achievement measures including achievement test data. Principal roles, responsibilities, and authority must be redesigned to focus on supporting and enhancing teacher performance. Principals and teachers need to become more skillful in using data to inform decisions. Resources need to be reallocated to support achievement and the culture of the school needs to change to focus on student achievement.

## Strategies to Improve School Leader Development and Accountability

### a. Paired School Model

Montana plans to implement a “Paired-School Model” of leader development. The design of Montana’s SAELP II proposal calls for the identification of a network of demonstration districts that will provide expertise to underperforming districts. One high performing demonstration district will be identified in each of five regions of the state. Twenty districts have been identified as low achieving and in need of improvement (NCLB criteria) that will be paired with high achieving districts in a network of support. These paired schools within the region will form a network for training, will meet as a group, and will meet in intervisitations as mentor/mentee. The design calls for principals of high performing schools to mentor or coach principals of low performing schools. The design is based on Michael Fullan’s research contained in his work, *Leading a Culture of Change*, and from successful models found in New York District #2 and Newport News, Virginia Public Schools. It should be noted that Montana does not have a LEAD district. In preparing for our SAELP II Proposal, the Montana Consortium examined the work of LEAD districts and SAELP I demonstration sites to search for a promising model for Montana’s schools. The paired-schools model implemented in Newport News has the greatest application to Montana’s needs. It is our intent to forge a partnership with Newport News as our “informal” LEAD district to assist Montana with materials, expertise and results as we develop our strategies for implementation of our paired-schools model.

Analysis of state data for student achievement and demographic characteristics has been conducted and will insure that paired schools are well matched and share common ground, thus the modeling of best practice by mentors will have direct application. Participation by the high performing schools will be voluntary, but incentives, including recognition for high performance, will help guarantee participation. High performing demonstration schools will be supported with a SAELP subcontract to support their work. Low performing schools will be mandated to participate as a part of their assistance plan from the State. Quality training that will help principals develop the skills and capacity necessary to improve student learning will be augmented by mentoring from high performing school principals. The goal is to create a professional learning community where leaders get to know each other, learn together, collaborate, inquire, and share and grow together. Beyond principals or central office administrators helping each other, teachers from the paired-schools will engage in coaching and modeling with each other (more on this strategy in our “breakthrough idea” #2) which will result in improving the overall system, not just improving the leader. It is Montana’s belief that we cannot substantially change the role of leaders without changing the role of teachers. We will connect to existing initiatives to implement the teacher mentoring initiative. As well as developing new leadership skill, a primary objective will be to change the school culture.

### b. Problem of Scale and Rural Isolation

It is important to build a critical mass. The vastness of Montana and its rural nature, together with the more than four hundred school districts necessitates involving a large number of demonstration sites. The Montana Consortium has agreed on dividing the state into five regions. It is the intent of the Consortium to link four underperforming schools with

one demonstration high performing school in each of the five regions. The subsequent improvement of the low achieving schools will serve as a demonstration of best practice for other schools in that region. The high achieving schools will become models not only for their paired school but also for all other schools in the region having improvement goals.

#### c. Training, Institute, and Mentoring Detail

The design of the Montana SAELP II proposal calls for intensive leader development in institutes, ongoing training, and mentoring/modeling by high performing principals and teachers. Utilizing SAELP I funding, Montana created a standards-based (ISLLC) professional development model for school leaders. SAELP II will provide incentive funds to implement the model and demonstrate the link between improved leadership and improved student achievement. The design calls for self-assessment by leaders of both high performing and low performing schools utilizing the McREL *Balanced Leadership* assessment or the *Educational Leadership Improvement Tool* developed by Oregon. The self-assessment will become the needs assessment to identify the appropriate institute or training content. Mentors (principals and teachers) will receive intensive training to better facilitate their roles. Improvement strategies will be data driven, based on existing information collected by the Office of Public Instruction in each district's Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement as required by State Board of Education rule and addressed in Montana's SAELP I initiative.

#### d. Ethnicity and Poverty – Our Highest Need Students

Schools identified as the lowest achieving in Montana all have high concentrations of Native American students and high levels of poverty. These schools generally are isolated on or near Indian reservations and have a long history of underperformance. While their tradition of failure has been well known by state officials, they have felt powerless to intervene because of Montana's history of local control and, in particular, the sovereignty of reservation governing tribal councils. No Child Left Behind has provided the motivation for Montana school officials and tribal councils to seriously seek solutions to resolve the persisting problem of low achievement of Native American students. Thus, conditions are ripe for comprehensive intervention. However, because achievement is so low, a culture of low expectations, excuse making, mistrust and negativity characterize most of these schools; reform strategies must be particularly powerful. Training alone or isolated programs are not enough to actually create sustainable change. A powerful paired-school model has the greatest promise to address these substantial challenges. The Montana project could ultimately become a model for other reservation schools across the nation or rurally isolated schools with high poverty levels.

#### e. Holding Leaders Accountable

Key to our breakthrough idea is holding school leaders accountable to the practices and behaviors that actually result in improved student achievement. The Montana SAELP II proposal calls for the development of a standards based (ISLLC, AASA, Key Works, etc.) superintendent and principal evaluation instrument that has student achievement as a focus. The participating paired-schools will utilize the leader evaluation as an accountability tool to

insure that changes in practice in low achieving schools actually occurs. Leaders from high achieving schools can validate their own performance with the evaluation instrument and use it as a development tool in mentoring leaders from low achieving schools.

### Feasibility

The feasibility of the “paired-schools” model is high. A Wallace funded demonstration school in Newport News, Virginia utilized the paired-schools model and has experienced early success. Because of the particularly challenging low achieving schools (high ethnic minority, high poverty, and long histories of failure) that are being targeted by the Montana SAELP II project, a particularly powerful strategy must be engaged to have promise of success. It is readily apparent from data analysis that the targeted low achieving schools have adequate resources (reservation schools receive state formula funding and an equal amount or more in Impact Aid funding) to begin the hard work of improving student learning. What is needed is leader development that helps them acquire the skill, knowledge, and beliefs to reallocate resources; to understand how to use data to make changes that drive student learning outcomes; to understand the interactions among learners, teachers, and content and make needed improvements; and to create a Community of Practice (Professional Learning Community) that supports student learning. Taken together, these multiple influences on school achievement will result in sustainable system learning that occurs through the evaluation and development of new local policies, practices, and structures to enhance system performance. By augmenting high quality training with mentoring and coaching, the SAELP II proposal will establish a focus on learning that is contextualized to the school, coherent, and based on expertise and practices that have resulted in high student achievement in the mentor/model school.

### Potential Obstacles

There are obstacles to the success of the SAELP II proposal. Most significant is the recognition that substantive change takes time. Because the initiative extends over five years, turnover among key stakeholders could interfere with progress. Predictable challenges to smooth implementation would occur if the superintendent who agrees to participation is replaced with a superintendent who is resistant to participation; if school board members who agree to hold school leaders accountable using a student achievement based evaluation system are replaced with board members who seek harmony over improvements; or if key mentors leave. These challenges must be met by strong support from the Governor’s office, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Board of Education (BPE). The SAELP II proposal must be adopted by OPI and BPE as the primary improvement strategy for schools who have been identified as needing improvement under NCLB. Schools in need of improvement will be required to participate as part of the NCLB sanction and the state developed assistance model.

Another predictable obstacle is voluntary participation of high performing schools. It is possible that mentor leaders and teachers will see participation as too time consuming and taking away from their own journey to excellence thus generating reluctance to sign on. It is critical that Montana’s SAELP II proposal creates incentives for their participation. The Newport News School District found that “The idea of one school helping another school was borne out of the desire of participants to be part of something bigger than themselves...”

(Fullan as cited in *'Schools Helping Schools'* p.7). It should also be noted that while low performing schools fall under state and federal sanctions, there is no strategy in Montana to recognize and reward high performing schools. Thus, it is anticipated that the obstacle of reluctance of mentors can be overcome with a dual strategy of creating incentives and appealing to a desire to 'be part of something bigger' and the related recognition of high performance. OPI and BPE enthusiastically support a proposal that would not only allow them to assist low performing schools but also recognize and reward high performing schools. Finally, if high performing schools are not given resources to free up time, provide needed training, and meet regularly with their paired underperforming schools, they may see the project as competing for their own scarce resources. It is critical that the demonstration schools have adequate funding to carry out their work.

## **B. Connection to and Advancement of Existing Policy Goals**

The Montana SAELP II proposal is directly connected to the state's NCLB plan. Our proposal identifies schools in need of improvement (low performing schools) and, as part of the required NCLB sanctions, provides assistance in the form of leader training, leader mentoring, and teacher mentoring (see more on teacher mentoring in breakthrough idea #2) by teaming the identified low performing school with high performing school leaders and teachers. Additionally, all of the identified schools are currently receiving intervention through other targeted federal assistance programs such as Title I, Reading First, etc. These existing targeted Federal assistance programs will become a part of the system change that is inherent in the SAELP II model. It is critical that the SAELP II proposal for school improvement does not "stand alone" but becomes integrated into a comprehensive improvement plan for each low performing school that is implemented by Office of Public Instruction under NCLB strategy. As stated in the RFP, "SAELP cannot succeed in isolation from the existing policy context". It should be seen as an opportunity that Montana has not fully developed their strategy for assisting low performing schools and has eagerly participated in the development of the SAELP II proposal as a beginning point for developing a more comprehensive and systemic assistance plan. Additionally, resources for school improvement are extremely scarce and the addition of Wallace resources to the overall pool of funds to be used to assist low performing schools is welcome and needed. It is exciting that the SAELP II proposal can lead the way to improved student learning in identified schools and eventually to all schools.

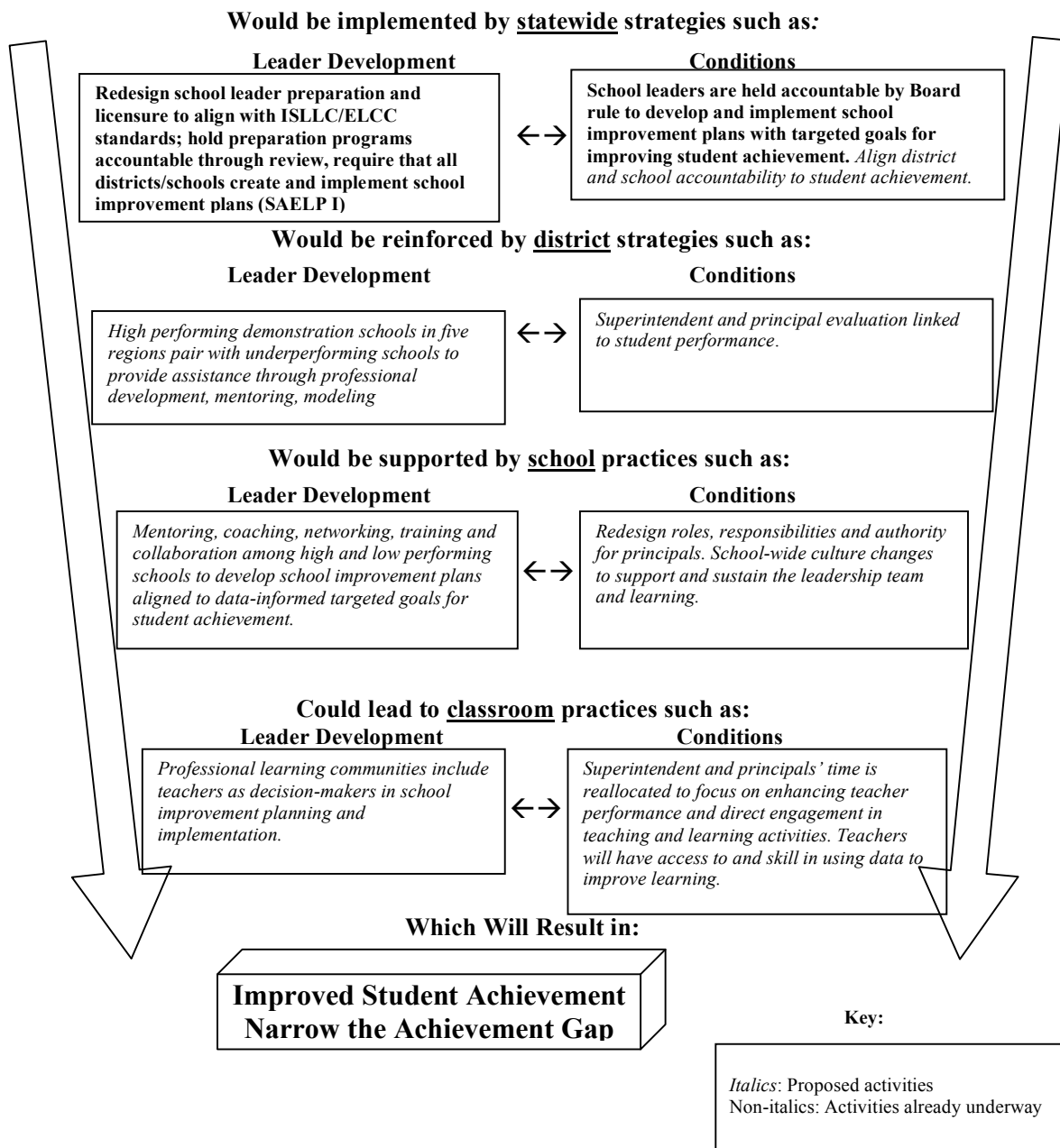
## **C. Strategic Through-Line from Policy to Classroom**

Leadership to Learning Strategic Through-line (template below)



# Leadership to Learning Strategic Through-Line

**Montana SAELP Breakthrough Idea # 1: Build leadership capacity by pairing underperforming schools with high performing demonstration schools to meet targeted student achievement goals.**



## SAELP II WORKPLAN TEMPLATE

**Breakthrough Idea #1: Build leadership capacity by pairing underperforming schools with high performing demonstration schools to meet targeted student achievement goals.**

	Strategies/Activities	Responsibilities or TA Required	Time
<b>State</b>	<p><b>Strategy:</b> To align accountability to Board of Public Education rule requiring all districts and schools to create improvement plans with targeted goals for improving student learning, new school leader evaluation will be adopted that links improvement planning and student achievement to performance.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete SAELP I work on Superintendent evaluation. State level policy makers and professional associations adopt model superintendent evaluation process and instrument. Develop and adopt a principal evaluation process and instrument.</li> <li>2. Create a system to measure improvement of underperforming school in year one, three and five and establish baseline data.</li> </ol>	<p>TA contract for a review of principal evaluation process and instruments.</p> <p>Nc support for principal evaluation models</p> <p>TA for system design</p>	<p>Adoption Superintendent evaluation October, 2004.</p> <p>Principal evaluation Jan. 2005</p> <p>Fall, 2004</p>
<b>District</b>	<p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement a professional development model that pairs high performing demonstration schools with underperforming schools in the same region to provide assistance, training, mentoring, coaching to meet targeted goals for student achievement.</li> <li>2. Change district policy to require superintendent, principal, school, and district evaluation is aligned with school improvement planning and student performance by using state adopted models.</li> </ol> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and enlist high performing and underperforming schools in each of five regions to participate. Train mentors in high performing schools. Assess needs and capacities in high and low performing schools.</li> <li>2. Ongoing training, coaching, mentoring and modeling of superintendents from demonstration schools with superintendents from underperforming schools to create and implement data informed district improvement plans to meet targeted goals for student achievement.</li> <li>3. Redefine roles of superintendent to include direct engagement with teaching and learning and formalize in district policy.</li> <li>4. Redefine role, responsibilities and authority of principals and formalize in district policy.</li> <li>5. Evaluate school leaders using systems and tools adopted by state and aligned with new roles, responsibilities and authority for school improvement and student achievement.</li> </ol>	<p>TA from Newport News, VA paired-schools model.</p> <p>TA for mentor training</p>	<p>ongoing</p> <p>Jan, 2005</p> <p>Fall, 2004</p> <p>Started fall, 2004 and ongoing</p> <p>End of year one.</p> <p>Year two</p>
<b>School</b>	<p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Principals in underperforming schools are mentored, coached, trained, and networked to develop new skills for improving student achievement beginning with creating and implementing data-informed plans.</li> <li>2. Redesign roles, responsibilities, and authority for principals.</li> <li>3. School culture changes to reflect a learning community with multiple stakeholders engaged in decision-making on school improvement planning.</li> <li>4. Principals reallocate resources including time to directly increase time</li> </ol>	<p>TA for training</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year two</p> <p>Year three</p> <p>Years 2,3</p>



**SAELP Breakthrough Idea #2: Build strong leadership teams by distributing leadership to teachers and providing capacity-building support by pairing high and low performing schools.**

### **A. Identify Breakthrough Ideas**

#### **Key Condition Change**

In order to effect substantive school change, leadership needs to be redefined to include teacher leaders. “Student achievement can now be directly and unmistakably traced to the presence or lack of conditions that create high leadership capacity in schools, including teaching and instructional excellence. This is equally true in schools where achievement gaps are the most confounding” (Lambert, 2003 p. 55) We find the lack of a leadership team to be a persisting condition in low performing schools where teachers are not empowered to be part of the solution to improving the school. Teachers can and should add their perspective and expertise to district improvement and frequently can exert the greatest leverage with other teachers in improving teaching and learning. Teachers can and should mentor new teachers and provide critically needed induction support and should be engaged in coaching experienced teachers to adopt new strategies that result in improved student learning. Additionally, teachers can be engaged in peer supervision and may be involved in evaluation. When these critical tasks are distributed to key leaders beyond the principal, improved student achievement is more likely.

Quality professional development is critical to support teachers and principals in low performing schools. In many of Montana’s smaller, rurally isolated schools, opportunities for professional development may be no more than allowing designated days to attend meetings or workshops at personal expense and often at locations literally hundreds of miles away. Professional isolation and lack of professional development opportunities are significant factors in teacher turnover, particularly in low achieving schools serving high minority and high poverty students. A 2001 statewide report, *Who Will Teach Montana’s Children?* found that “over 80% of ...districts were having considerable difficulty hiring certified staff...” Thus, in our highest need schools, we find high teacher turnover and often the most poorly qualified teachers, which seriously hinders districts’ ability to provide educational opportunities that meet the needs of all our children and to comply with the requirements of No Child Left Behind. Unfortunately, Montana lacks a comprehensive model or system for delivering high quality professional development for teachers. There is neither a plan, nor funding, nor a system for delivering coordinated, focused programming that can be shown to result in increased student achievement.

The Montana SAELP II proposal calls for high performing schools to pair with low performing schools in a paired-school model which will draw upon staff expertise in the high performing schools to develop school improvement initiatives and to coach and mentor teachers in low performing schools. It should be noted that the paired-schools selected for breakthrough idea #2 are the same as for breakthrough idea #1 and expands leadership development to include teachers. Thus, lead teachers and principals will share instructional leadership responsibilities and, as a team of leaders, will involve themselves in the improvement of curriculum, instruction and workplace improvements in low achieving schools. This will result in changing the key condition of low performance to a community of

learners where new beliefs could be practiced, expressed and nurtured. The Newport News report on their paired-schools model stating, “It is the combined forces of shared leadership that makes a difference. School leadership is a collective experience.” The following example was provided in their report, *School Leadership and Reform: Case Studies of Newport News Paired-School Model* (2003):

*One of the mentor schools third grade team worked with their sister school’s fifth grade team. They participated in intervisitations, coaching and modeling in the classroom, and in social events. The idea was to build trust. The low performing school’s fifth grade team was able in one semester to improve student achievement from 37 to 73 percent in reading. The low performing high school achieved full accreditation .... The principal of the low performing school was astounded at her fifth grade team’s successes. She and her staff stopped making excuses, i.e., ‘if only we had better teachers, better kids, etc.’ She had learned to share leadership, letting her teachers develop strategies for improvement in collaboration with their sister school (p. 8).*

## Strategies to Improve School Leader Development

### a. Paired-School Model

The paired-school model described in breakthrough idea #1 will be utilized. The same network of demonstration districts in five regions across the state will be targeted. The pairs will participate in joint institutes, participate in intervisitations for modeling, coaching and mentoring, and will meet as a group to form a network schools focused on improvement. Through the paired-school demonstration sites, a network will be formed which will provide teachers with an extended, regional learning community in which to develop their professional skills. The proposal calls for teachers from high performing schools to assist teachers from low performing schools for the purpose of improving teaching and learning, to develop teacher leaders and to change the school culture.

### b. Develop Teacher Leaders with the Necessary Knowledge, Skill and Capacity to Improve Student Learning in a Distributed Leadership Model

The design of the Montana SAELP II proposal calls for teacher leader development utilizing the model of “distributed leadership” in institutes, ongoing training, and mentoring/modeling by high performing teachers. Some training, such as using data to inform decisions, will be in conjunction with principal training (breakthrough idea #1), but some training may be specialized to teacher leader skills and knowledge building. Mentor teachers will receive intensive training to better understand and carry out their roles. It should be noted that mentors will not only engage in instructional mentoring/coaching, they will also engage in leadership coaching in which they will seek to expand the respondents focus from being a reflective practitioner to being a leader. The work of Linda Lambert in her “Emerging Teacher Leadership” continuum will help guide movement of teachers to leaders. The *Leadership Capacity Staff Survey* developed by Linda Lambert (2003) which includes items and indicators related to the features of high leadership capacity schools can be used to assess the professional development needs of individuals and groups. Montana SAELP II proposes to use this instrument to create a profile of strengths and needs of participating teachers. The survey will assist in creating quality professional development.

Additionally, Lambert's *Leadership Capacity School Survey* will help to take a broader look at the school and its culture. This survey lends itself to a focus on whole-school improvements. Both surveys will be powerful tools for collaborative reflection between mentors from high achieving schools and teachers and principals in low achieving schools.

The *Montana Christa McAuliffe Professional Development Planning Project* has been funded to identify a model of professional development that results in measurable improvement in student achievement. The McAuliffe Project plans to track beginning teachers and assess their skills based on self and supervisor's evaluations linked to student achievement data to measure the impact of specific professional development as it impacts student achievement. SAELP II proposes to partner with the McAuliffe Project in developing new teachers in both our high achieving schools and low achieving schools. This partnership will strengthen the McAuliffe Project and will strengthen the SAELP II Project.

#### c. Change Working Conditions

Key to the success of breakthrough idea #2 is the alteration in working conditions that will be needed if system change is to occur. Teachers sharing with teachers is the best way to identify working conditions that are creating barriers to student achievement.

It is important to change the school culture in low performing schools and to redefined leadership and encourage teachers to participate in meaningful opportunities that result in sustainable improvements in student achievement.

*This requires a changed role of the principal and probably changing policies. Capacity building principals align their actions to the belief that everyone has the right, responsibility, and capability to work as a leader. Such a perspective requires that principals be clear about their own core values and confident in their own capacity to work well with others by influencing, facilitating, guiding, and mentoring. They need to resist using authority to tell and command (Lambert, 2003 p. 43).*

This reinforces the interconnectedness of breakthrough idea #1 to breakthrough idea #2. Principals and teachers must both participate in development, modeling and mentoring to create high leadership capacity in schools, which can now be directly and unmistakably traced to increased student achievement. The school culture must support a strong learning community. The Newport News SAELP demonstration project found that "It takes capacity to build capacity; ...teachers and principals who have not worked together this way before may not know what to do. They may be motivated to engage in informed professional judgment, but they may not have the concepts, skills, and knowledge necessary to do it effectively. The paired school model facilitates capacity development...paired schools collaborate on creating and sustaining professional learning communities" (p. 12). The Newport News project was based on the idea that the professional learning community results in increased achievement and eliminates the achievement gap. They state, "The idea is to provide a safe environment for educators supported by experts internal and external to the system to conceptualize and invest in policies that will increase the capacity of educators to perform in new ways.

#### d. Feasibility

Feasibility of this project is supported through the substantial research of Linda Lambert and from the early successes of the Newport News demonstration district. Connecting

breakthrough ideas #1 and #2 ensures that not only are leaders retrained, coached, mentored and have the benefit of modeling of best practice, but also that teachers helping teachers supports the systemic improvement model. Leaders at the UCLA School Management program have found that reflection, inquiry, and dialogue are the three most critical skill dimensions for improving schools (Martinez, 2001). They occur effectively when educators collaborate together. The paired-schools model proposed by Montana's SAELP II will facilitate this needed collaboration and provide a highly feasible model of school improvement.

#### e. Potential Obstacles

*Teacher turnover in low achieving schools:* According to a 2001 Montana study, only 29% of the students who complete teacher preparation programs in Montana are teaching in accredited Montana schools one or two years later. The ability to attract and retain high quality teachers, particularly in reservation and low achieving schools has reached crisis stage. According to this same report,

*Hiring and retention problems are most acute in already low-performing schools. In Montana, those schools are often located on or near American Indian reservations or in other high poverty urban areas where it is not uncommon for more than a quarter of the teachers to change every year. Montana's extreme rural isolation contributes to problems of recruitment and retention. In addition, for beginning teachers, professional isolation and lack of professional development opportunities are significant factors in turnover.*

In order to be effective in making sustainable gains in student learning, the SAELP II proposal, together with partner initiatives, must address the problem and create a community of learners that attracts, retains and supports quality teachers. Additionally we must plan for the enculturation of new personnel in our demonstration network to our learning community of shared leadership.

*Needed Changes in Culture and Beliefs about Leadership:* Research indicates that distributed leadership has significant and positive influence on the culture of schools and the relationship among teachers. However, hierarchical cultures of authority; peer opposition and the belief that 'no teacher is different than another'; and a desire for harmony and safety over conflict and risk are a few of the cultural factors that discourage teachers from leading. Some teachers may attempt to sabotage the learning communities work in an effort to sustain the status quo. This barrier is predictable and by understanding and planning for change can be overcome with research-driven change strategies. Eventually resisters will adopt behaviors consistent with a learning community or will leave.

*Reward Structures, Time:* Time is one of the greatest barriers to implementing the SAELP II proposal. However, by distributing leadership, principals gain valuable time to focus on instructional leadership. The key to finding time will be to find "new" time during the day. We will rely on the Newport News demonstration district to help us with strategies their schools have found to be effective in addressing the issue of time for our paired schools.

*Redesign policies and practice:* Distributed leadership requires the redesign of policies and practice. SAELP I has started the dialog with state union leaders in discussing the redefining

of teacher roles to include leadership. Substantial progress has been made in one of our SAELP I demonstration sites with a distributed leadership model; however, there are still union barriers when conversations about teachers engaging in evaluation (as opposed to merely supervision) occur. The continued involvement of union leaders on the SAELP Consortium and in decision-making is critical. Early successes indicate that Montana has been able to make more progress in this area than most states.

## **B. Connection to and Advancement of Existing Policy Goals**

The Montana SAELP II proposal is directly connected to the state's NCLB plan. Our proposal identifies schools in need of improvement (low performing schools) and, as part of the required NCLB sanctions, provides assistance in the form of leader training, leader mentoring, and teacher mentoring by pairing the identified low performing school with high performing school leaders and teachers. Additionally, all of the identified schools are currently receiving intervention through other targeted federal assistance programs such as Title I, Reading First, etc. These existing targeted Federal assistance programs will become a part of the system change that is inherent in the SAELP II model. It is critical that the SAELP II proposal for school improvement does not "stand alone" but becomes integrated into a comprehensive improvement plan for each low performing school that is implemented by Office of Public Instruction under NCLB strategy. As stated in the RFP, "SAELP cannot succeed in isolation from the existing policy context". It should be seen as an opportunity that Montana has not fully developed their strategy for assisting low performing schools and has eagerly participated in the development of the SAELP II proposal as a beginning point for developing a more comprehensive and systemic assistance plan. Additionally, resources for school improvement are extremely scarce and the addition of Wallace resources to the overall pool of funds to be used to assist low performing schools is welcome and needed. It is exciting that the SAELP II proposal can lead the way to improved student learning in identified schools and eventually to all schools.

Additionally, the SAELP II breakthrough idea #2 directly links with the *Montana Christa McAuliffe Professional Development Planning Project* to use national and state teacher policy initiatives to build teacher leadership and local strategies for improving instruction. This breakthrough idea will develop policies, in collaboration with teacher leaders and unions, to provide teachers with time and resources to act on district and school improvement plans.

## **C. Strategic Through-Line from Policy to Classroom**

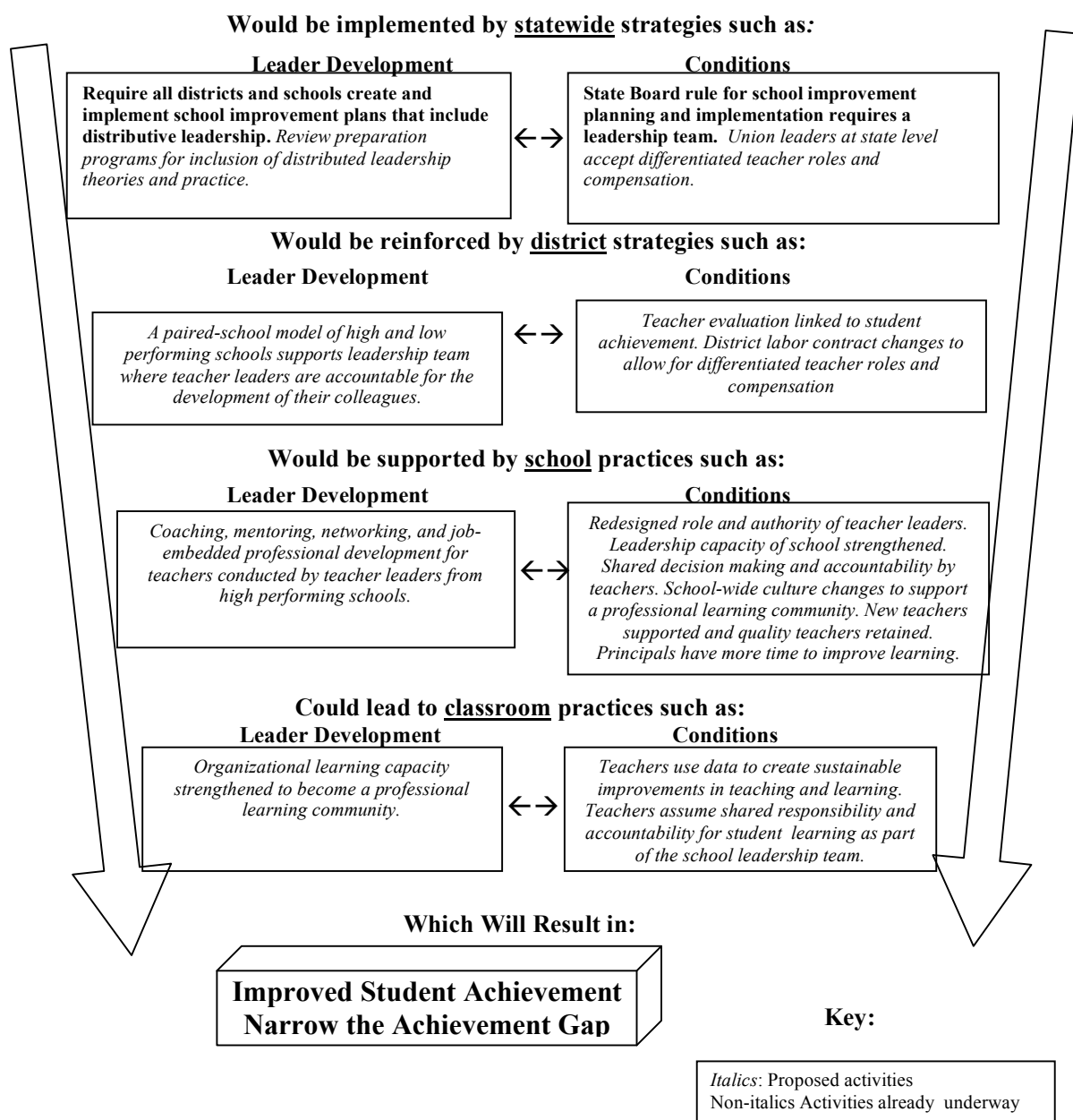
Leadership to Learning Strategic Through-line Template



## Leadership to Learning Strategic Through-Line

**SAELP II Goal:** To develop key linkages between leader development and conditions of leadership at all levels of the state system to improve student achievement.

**Montana SAELP Breakthrough Idea #2: Build strong leadership teams by distributing leadership to teachers and providing capacity-building support by pairing high and low performing schools.**



#### D. Work-plan of Projected Activities

**Breakthrough Idea # 2: Build strong leadership teams by distributing leadership to teachers and providing capacity-building support by pairing high and low performing schools.**

	Strategies and Activities	Responsibility or TA	Time
State	<b>Strategies:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include distributive leadership as a part of leader and teacher preparation.</li> <li>2. Pair high performing demonstration schools with underperforming schools to provided necessary training, coaching, mentoring to develop teacher leaders.</li> <li>3. Secure state level union support for differentiated roles and compensation for teachers</li> </ol>	TA to conduct study	Study fall 2004, Initiate changes year three  By Jan. 2005
	<b>Activities:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review preparation programs for inclusion of distributive leadership. Support changes in university programs as needed to include distributive leadership.</li> <li>2. Initiate conversations with deans on university program redesign</li> <li>3. Meet and agree with union on redefined teacher roles and compensation, formalize in written agreements.</li> <li>4. Train teacher mentors from high performing schools.</li> </ol>	NC Support for models          TA for training	Fall, 20004
District	<b>Strategies:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High performing demonstration schools develop strong leadership teams in underperforming schools by providing assistance and expertise through training, coaching, mentoring, modeling.</li> <li>2. Teacher leaders are accountable for the development of their colleagues through coaching, modeling and mentoring</li> <li>3. Teacher roles redesigned and reflected in policy.</li> <li>4. Teacher evaluation changes to include accountability for student achievement.</li> <li>5. District labor contract changes to allow for differentiated roles and compensation.</li> </ol> <b>Activities:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revise teacher evaluation.</li> <li>2. Revise teacher compensation schedules.</li> <li>3. Identify and train mentor teachers</li> </ol>	NC support on model policy       TA to examine new teacher evaluation process, instruments NC support for models	Fall, 2004       Years 2,3 1/2005 6/005 6/005
School	<b>Strategies:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher leaders develop new teacher leaders in underperforming schools who will assume leadership roles as a part of a district leadership team</li> <li>2. Teacher mentors from demonstration schools provide mentoring for teachers in underperforming schools to support improved teaching and learning practices.</li> </ol>		Fall, 2004 and ongoing  Fall, 2004 and ongoing

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Demonstration schools assist underperforming schools in redesigning roles and authority of teachers to include shared decision making and accountability.</li> <li>4. New teachers are supported and retained through mentoring.</li> <li>5. Principals spend more time directly supporting and enhancing teacher performance.</li> </ol> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess leadership capacity of teachers and school and plan professional development activities to support the identified needs</li> <li>2. Create a system for intervisitations for teacher leaders from high performing demonstration sites to train, coach, mentor, and network with teachers from underperforming schools.</li> <li>3. Dialog on developing a professional learning community and the school culture changes needed to support it.</li> <li>4. Measure time principals spend directly supporting and enhancing teacher performance.</li> <li>5. collect and analyze data on improved student achievement</li> </ol>	NC for models	<p>Yr 2,3</p> <p>Fall, 2004 and ongoing</p> <p>Fall, 2004</p> <p>Fall, 2004</p> <p>Years 2,3</p> <p>Years 2,3</p> <p>End of year 1, 3 and project to year 5</p>
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**Main Deliverable:** Underperforming schools will develop strong leadership teams who share accountability for student achievement. Timeline: Indicators by year two, evidence in changed practices by year three.

**Main Deliverable:** Teacher contracts will change to reflect differentiated roles, responsibilities and compensation. Timeline: Year two.

**Main Deliverable:** Teacher evaluation will change to reflect accountability for student performance. Timeline: Year three.

**Measures:** The primary measure of improvement of student achievement in underperforming schools will be standardized achievement tests. Changed contracts and evaluations will be an end result.

## **Section II(5): Composition of SAELP Teams**

The Montana SAELP Consortium will govern the Montana SAELP II Project. One of the major strengths of Montana's SAELP I project was the strong working relationship of the Consortium. The Montana SAELP Consortium has active membership participation of key policy makers and influential stakeholders including the governor; the state superintendent of public instruction; the state board of education chair; key legislators from both parties; local superintendents and principals; professional association representative from the school administrators association, the school boards association; rural education; union representation; business executives, and Native American representation. Remarkable was the continuous involvement of all of these high level Consortium members. The Consortium has agreed to continue as the executive committee of SAELP II. The role of the Consortium will include:

- The development of and commitment to the breakthrough ideas included in SAELP II proposal.
- Setting of policy and goals for SAELP II.
- The evaluation of progress toward the implementation and successful completion of the SAELP II work plan and approval of modifications as needed.
- Fiscal oversight.
- Communications with constituents they represent through newsletters, conferences, reports and media
- Hiring, supervision, evaluation, of staff
- Attendance at regular bi-monthly meetings.
- Maintain regular and frequent contact with the SAELP II Project Director to ensure that effective implementation takes place.

The SAELP Consortium will rely on a quality implementation team to carry out the work of the Project. Short biographical sketches for key project personnel follow:

### **Project Director**

Dr. Joanne Erickson served as Project Director for SAELP I and will continue as project director for SAELP II. Dr. Erickson is a professor of Educational Leadership at Montana State University, a former school administrator, and former Office of Public Instruction staff member. Her 30-year career in Montana education has allowed her to make critical connections with the professional community and with key policy makers proving invaluable to the effectiveness of the Consortium. The project director will contribute 25% of her time to this project. The project will support a graduate teaching assistant to free time for Dr. Erickson to devote to the project. Montana State University supports the grant proposal and sees Dr. Erickson's work with SAELP as an important link between the university and practice and appropriate to the service mission of the university. Of the SAELP I seven initiatives, all were fully or partially implemented which provides an evaluation of the leadership provided for SAELP I.

### Communications Specialist

A communications specialist will be hired part time to assist the Consortium in communicating with key constituent groups whose involvement will be necessary to achieve success. The person selected will have demonstrated competence and ability in the area of working with the media, web-based communications, newsletters, and press releases.

## **Section II(6). Demonstration Districts**

Montana does not have a LEAD district. However, since Montana SAELP II proposes breakthrough ideas that will support the improvement of underperforming districts by pairing them with high performing demonstration districts in a paired-schools model, we have asked the Newport News SAELP demonstration district to “informally” partner with us. Dave Blackburn with the Newport News project has agreed to assist Montana with lessons learned from their paired-schools model. Since Montana’s underperforming schools are mostly high poverty, Native American schools on reservations, experiences from Newport News in empowering marginalized cultures and communities will be particularly helpful. Additionally, they have early successes with cultural change, providing networks of support and targeted use of data to address specific learning needs. Newport News will become a key resource for the Montana SAELP project in the planning phase to provide valued practitioner perspective and input for state policy development that is needed to support the project. Additionally, they can assist us in implementation by sharing their successes and challenges, materials and expertise from their paired-schools model.

Montana’s SAELP II proposes to work with five high performing demonstration districts, one in each of five regions across the state, and 20 underperforming schools. The high performing demonstration schools will be paired with 20 underperforming schools (four in each region). Demonstration sites will be responsible for implementing the paired-school model of professional development, which includes sharing expertise, providing training, coaching, mentoring and creating a regional network. The demonstration district network will serve as pilot sites for a more comprehensive statewide strategy to change policies and practice that connect leadership to student achievement. Participation as high performance demonstration sites will be voluntary and selection will require strong district and community commitment to participation. Underperforming schools will be mandated to participate as part of the state’s strategy for assistance to identified ‘Schools in Need of Improvement’.

## **Section II (7). Technical Assistance Needed**

Critical to the success of the Montana SAELP II proposal is the partnership with the Newport News SAELP demonstration district. The research available to us from the various National Consortium members will be helpful as we research distributive leadership, policies, contracts, and new leader evaluation models that are part of our proposal. We will call on national consortium partners to support us in strengthening our communication plan so our SAELP work is disseminated to other rural states who need strategies that work for improving rurally isolated, low performing schools. We will develop a rural schools partnership with Vermont to study governance in rural states. Technical assistance will be needed to investigate governance strategies that support student achievement and work in rural states. We have planned for technical assistance in designing a system to collect and analyze data

including early indicators on the achievement progress of our network of underperforming schools. Technical assistance is also planned to conduct mentor training with school leaders and teachers in our high performing demonstration sites. Subcontracts will be given to the five high performing demonstration districts to support their work with the underperforming districts. It is anticipated a portion of that subcontract will be used for technical assistance in targeted need areas (for example using data to inform decisions).

## **Section II(8). Commitment of the Governor and Key Policymakers**

Montana's governor is a key partner to the SAELP Proposal. The governor's office, the Office of Public Instruction, and the Board of Public Education have all agreed to make the regional assistance model of paired-schools a key improvement strategy for 'Schools In Need of Improvement' identified under NCLB. An important role for the governor's office is in communicating the results of the project. Part of our communication strategy is to have the governor hold public briefings about progress of the underperforming schools which will be covered by the media. The acts of the governor attach importance to the project and showcase it as the state model for systemic reform for improving underperforming schools. As noted earlier in the proposal, Montana's strength is in the strong consortium that has been established between key policymakers. This relationship will continue under SAELP II and will support the work outlined in the proposal.

## **Section II (10): Measurable Results**

### **F. Measurable Results**

In order to demonstrate progress in improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap, Montana's SAELP II proposes to create a comprehensive system of data collection and analysis. We have identified four important benchmarks for student achievement: 1) achievement prior to implementation of the strategies; 2) achievement at the end of one year; 3) achievement at the end of three years; and 4) based on trend data at the end of three years, predicted achievement at the end of five years. Change in academic achievement will be measured over time, using the state administered ITBS. In addition, these achievement data, from each of the 25 schools, will be evaluated with respect to Montana's standard for adequate yearly progress (NCLB).

As mentioned above, improvement in student achievement will not likely be realized until well into the project. However, there are a number of early and intermediate measurable indicators that should be precursors to student success. These will be measured early and periodically through out the course of the project. These indicators include assessment of: new and more effective communication between school principals and teachers, students, and parents; reallocation of resources, including principal time; improved teacher satisfaction with their jobs; higher levels of engagement by teachers in decision-making; improved student attendance; improved behavior patterns in the school; improved course grades and higher levels of college preparation course taking; and higher parental satisfaction with the schools.

These data plus student achievement data will be collected according to the following calendar:

At the beginning of the project, the achievement data and indicators identified above will be collected from students, teachers, and school administrators at all 25 schools participating in the project (5 high performing and 20 underperforming). These data will provide baseline measures against which future measurements can be compared, both across time and between low achieving schools and high achieving schools. These same data will be collected at the end of the first year and at the end of the third year of the Project. Sustainable impact within five years will be estimated using trends developed from these three data collection efforts. One of the points of analysis will be the degree to which this project helps close the achievement gap.

## **Section II (11): Sustainability**

The cumulative work of the SAELP II proposal and the collaboration with other initiatives such as the *Montana Christa McAuliffe Professional Development Planning Project* will develop the core of a proposal to be submitted to the United States Department of Education's Ready to Teach Program to sustain the work of SAELP II. Federal law requires low-performing districts to develop plans to address the professional development needs of their teachers and principals and allocate not less than 10 percent of Title I funds to improve professional development practices. Montana will use these Title I funds and the new Ready to Teach Program funds as key sources to provide high quality professional development for practicing principals. SAELP II and its partners will demonstrate how critical changes driven through leadership and teacher leader capacity building can be integrated into a systemic model of school improvement that results in student learning gains. Federal Title I and the new Ready to Teach Program are funding sources that could sustain needed funding for leadership development for teachers and principals. However, real sustainability comes when scarce state resources are reallocated to include leadership development. In order for that to occur, key policy makers and stakeholders must understand the link between leadership (defined as distributed leadership) and sustained school improvement. Demonstrating substantial and sustainable improvement in student learning and closing the achievement gap in low achieving schools in five different regions across the state in our network of SAELP II demonstration schools will be the evidence needed to convince policy makers to reallocate resources to leadership development. Additionally, strategies for succession planning and selection of principals and teachers must play an important part in the strategy for school improvement. A critical part of the strategy for school improvement must include developing an infrastructure that supports a focus on student learning.

Additionally, Montana should seek partnerships with national organizations experienced in developing quality school leaders during SAELP II, so as to sustain quality professional development practices once the project has ended. It will be critical for key policy makers such as the governor and state superintendent, and Board of Education to view leadership development as one of the key strategies for improving low performing schools and thus, to include ongoing leadership development as part of their NCLB plan.

## Budget for the Breakthrough Strategy

### THE WALLACE FOUNDATION FINANCIAL PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

#### ***SECTION I: PROJECT BUDGET BY BREAKTHROUGH IDEA ACTIVITIES***

<u>Breakthrough Idea #1:</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Personnel: Project Director and graduate teaching assistant	\$ 53,700
Project Cost: Operations, travel, technical assistance	\$ 35,500
Indirect Cost: ½ of allowable 15%	\$ 45,000
Subcontracts: To high performing demonstration sites:	\$150,000
In-Kind Contribution:	\$239,200

<u>Breakthrough Idea #2:</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Personnel: Project director and graduate teaching assistant	\$ 53,700
Project Cost: Operations, travel and technical assistance	\$ 35,500
Indirect Costs: ½ of allowable 15%	\$ 45,000
Subcontracts: To high performing demonstration sites	\$150,000
In-Kind Contribution:	\$239,200

<u>Communication Activities</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Personnel: Communications Specialist	\$21,600
Project Costs:	\$ 5,000
Indirect Costs	
Subcontracts Web site development and maintenance	\$ 5,000
In-Kind Contribution:	\$31,600



## Section II: Project Budget by Line Item

Budget Categories	Requested Support From			Total	Total	Other	Total
	Wallace			Wallace	Non-Wallace		Project
	Year 1 2004	Year 2 2005	Year 3 2006	Support	Support In-Kind		Budget
<b>BREAKTHROUGH IDEA 1</b>							
<b>PERSONNEL</b>							
Staff(Name/Title/Salary/% of time)	\$14,900	\$14,900	\$14,900	\$44,700	\$44,700	\$0	\$89,400
Benefits @ 20.1%	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$0	\$18,000
<b>OTHER DIRECT COSTS</b>							
Office Expenses	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$0	\$9,000
Equipment Rental/Purchase							
Travel/Accommodations	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$30,000
Printing/Publication							
Consultants	\$7,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$0	\$26,000
Conferences/Meetings	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0	\$6,000
Other costs							
<b>SUBCONTRACTS</b>	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$82,400	\$78,400	\$78,400	\$239,200	\$239,200	\$0	\$478,400
<b>BREAKTHROUGH IDEA 2</b>							
<b>PERSONNEL</b>							
Staff(Name/Title/Salary/% of time)	\$14,900	\$14,900	\$14,900	\$44,700	\$44,700	\$0	\$89,400
Benefits @ 20.1%	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$0	\$18,000
<b>OTHER DIRECT COSTS</b>							
Office Expenses	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$0	\$9,000
Equipment Rental/Purchase							
Travel/Accommodations	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$30,000
Printing/Publication							
Consultants	\$7,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$0	\$26,000
Conferences/Meetings	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0	\$6,000
Other costs							
<b>SUBCONTRACTS</b>	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$82,400	\$78,400	\$78,400	\$239,200	\$239,200	\$0	\$478,400
<b>COMMUNICATONS PLAN</b>							
<b>PERSONNEL</b>							
Staff(Name/Title/Salary/% of time)	\$7,200	\$7,200	\$7,200	\$21,600	\$21,600	\$0	\$43,200
Benefits							

**OTHER DIRECT COSTS**

Office Expenses

Equipment Rental/Purchase

Travel/Accommodations

Printing/Publication	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	10,000
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Consultants

Conferences/Meetings

Other costs

**INDIRECT COSTS at 7.5%**

SUBCONTRACTS	\$5,000			\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$10,000
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<b>TOTAL</b>	\$13,200	\$9,200	\$9,200	\$31,600	\$31,600	\$0	\$63,200
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**TOTAL PERSONNEL**

\$129,000

**TOTAL DIRECT COSTS**

\$76,000

**TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS@  
15%**

\$90,000

**TOTAL SUBCONTRACTS**

\$305,000

**GRAND TOTAL**

\$600,000	600,000	\$1,200,000
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## **Section III: Budget Narrative**

### **A. Activity Budget Description**

Personnel costs for the project director and the graduate teaching assistant are divided between the two breakthrough ideas. The Project Director will spend approximately 25% of her time on the project. The graduate teaching assistant helps support the project director and frees time for project management. A minimal amount of \$1,500 a year is allocated to office supplies which would include paper, copying, etc. Travel expense in the amount of \$10,000 per year is divided equally between the two breakthrough ideas and will be used to fund Consortium members travel to Wallace grantee conferences or to participate in training directly contributing to the project. Additionally, travel funds will be used for in-state travel to bring Consortium members together for regularly scheduled meetings. Conference/meeting funds will be used to support Consortium meetings including facility and meal costs. Consultant funds will provide technical assistance to the consortium as needed to carry out the project. Half of the project funds or \$300,000 will be subcontracted to the five high performance demonstration sites, with each receiving \$20,000 per year to support their work with the underperforming schools in their region. These funds will be used by the demonstration sites to provide training, technical assistance, intervisitations for modeling, mentoring, and coaching; and to form networks of schools working toward school improvement.

1. Breakthrough Idea #1: Equal distribution of personnel, direct costs and subcontracts in the amount of \$239,200.
2. Breakthrough Idea #2: Equal distribution of personnel, direct costs and subcontracts in the amount of \$239,200

### **B. In-Kind Contributions and Matching Funds**

This SAELP proposal is Montana's strategy for meeting the needs of schools identified by NCLB as needing improvement. The matching funds for the project will be those funds identified by the state to assist low performing schools. The Montana Christa McAuliffe Professional Development Planning Project will provide \$50,000 of matching funds. The remaining match will come from Federal Title Programs under No Child Left Behind as well as Reading First and Reading Excellence. Montana State initiatives such as Indian Education for All and the Five Year Comprehensive Education Plan will all also contribute to the pledged \$600,000 of in-kind match. Thus, the inkind match will consist of federal and state funds earmarked for assisting underperforming schools.

### **C. Demonstration of Sustainability (reflecting less reliance on Wallace)**

The SAELP II professional development model and conditions changes proposed herein will provide the statewide model for improving underperforming schools identified by NCLB. The successes of this project will demonstrate the need for continuing this work beyond the life of Wallace funding. New schools will likely move into the category of schools needing improvement under NCLB and the model established by this grant will be continued to provide assistance to these underperforming schools. Additionally, it is Montana's intent to use the partnerships formed by the SAELP Consortium to apply for the US Department of Education's Ready to Teach Program and to use this as the

implementation model. The five regions will become Professional Development Centers for the regionalization of professional development across the state.

## **Communications Plan**

### **A. Communications Goals**

Our primary communication goal will be to link school leadership to student achievement and reinforce the message that to improve student learning we must improve leadership. Secondly, we will highlight the SAELP paired-school model of high performing demonstration sites helping underperforming schools as the state systemic strategy to insure all Montana students reach high performance.

### **B. Key Messages**

Utilize the research from the McREL study *Balanced Leadership* to link leadership and learning. Focus on a positive message of the helping strategy of the paired-schools model to assist low performing schools. Recognize high performing demonstration schools and feature their achievement results and methods. Feature leadership teams as a school improvement strategy that include teachers, parents and other stakeholders including business.

### **C. Targeted Audiences**

The targeted audience is legislators, business community members, parents (who can influence legislators), and professional associations. We hope to influence legislators to fund a comprehensive plan for school improvement that sustains the paired-schools model. The role of the governor's office will be critical in leveraging legislative support. It is critical that the governor take up the message of improving underperforming schools to generate media support that is needed in our communications plan.

### **D. Define the Communications Tactics**

One of the primary tactics is for the Governor to hold public briefings. The media consistently attend these briefings. Invited to the briefings will be key policy makers from the Consortium and legislators from the education committees. The Governor will highlight progress in improving underperforming schools, crediting the SAELP, Wallace funded proposal. Opinion editorials from the Governor, the Chief State School Officer and the Board of Education will be published in newspapers and newsletters. The SAELP web site will be improved and will be linked to the Governor's, OPI, State Board, and professional association home pages. Public service announcements will be prepared for radio broadcast. The Governor has agreed to hold press conferences when key achievement points are reached.

### **E. Implementation**

A part-time communications specialist will be hired to support this communications plan. This person will work directly with the project director and the Consortium to implement the communications plan. Additionally, technical assistance will be contracted to refine the SAELP web page and link it to the Consortium partner's home pages.